



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

MATEUS PINA MENDES,

Defendant.

CR No. 2:22-cr-00371-PA

I N F O R M A T I O N

[18 U.S.C. § 1343: Wire Fraud; 18
U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C), 28 U.S.C.
§ 2461(c): Criminal Forfeiture]

The Acting United States Attorney charges:

[18 U.S.C. § 1343]

A. INTRODUCTORY ALLEGATIONS

At times relevant to this Information:

Defendant and the Relevant Entities

1. Defendant MATEUS PINA MENDES was a resident of Los Angeles, California.

2. Defendant MENDES claimed to be the owner of Multi One Media, a California company purportedly located in Beverly Hills, California.

3. Defendant MENDES claimed to be the owner of CuratedHigh, LLC, a company registered in Wyoming with a registered business address in Beverly Hills, California.

1 4. Defendant MENDES claimed to be the owner of Wakeover, a
2 California company purportedly located in Beverly Hills, California.

3 5. Defendant MENDES claimed to be the owner of Corner the
4 Market, a California company purportedly located in Beverly Hills,
5 California.

6 6. Defendant MENDES claimed to be the owner of Made in One, a
7 California company purportedly located in Los Angeles, California.

8 7. Defendant MENDES controlled a personal checking account in
9 his own name, maintained at Wells Fargo Bank ending in 3113 (the
10 "Wells Fargo 3113 Account").

11 The Paycheck Protection Program

12 8. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
13 ("CARES") Act was a federal law enacted in or about March 2020 that
14 was designed to provide emergency financial assistance to Americans
15 suffering economic harm as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. One
16 form of assistance provided by the CARES Act was the authorization of
17 United States taxpayer funds in forgivable loans to small businesses
18 for job retention and certain other expenses, through a program
19 referred to as the Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP").

20 9. In order to obtain a PPP loan, a qualifying business was
21 required to submit a PPP loan application signed by an authorized
22 representative of the business. The PPP loan application required
23 the small business (through its authorized representative) to
24 acknowledge the program rules and make certain affirmative
25 certifications in order to be eligible to obtain the PPP loan. One
26 such certification required the applicant to affirm that "[t]he [PPP
27 loan] funds w[ould] be used to retain workers and maintain payroll or
28 make mortgage interest payments, lease payments, and utility

1 payments." The applicant (through its authorized representative) was
2 also required to acknowledge that "I understand that if the funds are
3 used for unauthorized purposes, the federal government may pursue
4 criminal fraud charges." In the PPP loan application, the applicant
5 was required to state, among other things, its: (a) average monthly
6 payroll expenses; and (b) number of employees. These figures were
7 used to calculate the amount of money the small business was eligible
8 to receive under the PPP. In addition, the applicant was required to
9 provide documentation showing its payroll expenses.

10 10. A business's PPP loan application was received and
11 processed, in the first instance, by a participating financial
12 institution. If a PPP loan application was approved, the
13 participating financial institution would fund the PPP loan using its
14 own monies.

15 11. PPP loan proceeds were required to be used by the business
16 on certain permissible expenses, namely, payroll costs, interest on
17 mortgages, rent, and utilities. The PPP allowed the interest and
18 principal on the PPP loan to be entirely forgiven if the business
19 spent the loan proceeds on these expenses within a designated period
20 of time and used at least a minimum amount of the PPP loan proceeds
21 towards payroll expenses.

22 The Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program

23 12. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program ("EIDL") was a
24 United States Small Business Administration ("SBA") program that
25 provided low-interest financing to small businesses, renters, and
26 homeowners in regions affected by declared disasters.

1 13. The CARES Act authorized the SBA to provide EIDL loans of
2 up to \$2 million to eligible small businesses experiencing
3 substantial financial disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4 14. To obtain an EIDL loan, a qualifying business was required
5 to submit an application to the SBA and provide information about the
6 business's operations, such as the number of employees, gross
7 revenues for the 12-month period preceding the disaster, and cost of
8 goods sold in the 12-month period preceding the disaster. In the
9 case of EIDL loans for COVID-19 relief, the 12-month period was the
10 12-month period from January 31, 2019, to January 31, 2020. The
11 applicant was also required to certify that all of the information in
12 the application was true and correct to the best of the applicant's
13 knowledge.

14 15. EIDL loan applications were submitted directly to the SBA
15 and processed by the agency with support from a government
16 contractor. The amount of the loan, if the application was approved,
17 was determined based, in part, on the information provided by the
18 applicant about employment, revenue, and cost of goods sold. Any
19 funds issued under an EIDL loan were issued directly by the SBA.

20 16. EIDL loan funds could be used for payroll expenses, sick
21 leave, production costs, and business obligations, such as debts,
22 rent, and mortgage payments. If the applicant also obtained a loan
23 under the PPP, the EIDL loan funds could not be used for the same
24 purpose as the PPP loan funds.

25 SBA-Approved PPP Service Providers and Lenders

26 17. Company 1 was a technology company located in New York
27 City, New York and headquartered in Delaware that engaged in lending
28 to small businesses. Company 1 participated in the SBA's PPP as an

1 SBA-approved PPP lender. Small businesses seeking PPP loans could
2 apply to Company 1 for PPP loans. Company 1 would review the loan
3 applications and, if the application was approved for funding,
4 Company 1 would disburse the loan funds to the applicant.

5 B. SCHEME TO DEFRAUD

6 18. Beginning in or around May 2020 and continuing through in
7 or around March 2021, in Los Angeles County, within the Central
8 District of California, and elsewhere, defendant MENDES, knowingly
9 and with intent to defraud, devised, participated in, and executed a
10 scheme to defraud the SBA and SBA-approved lenders as to material
11 matters, and to obtain money from the SBA and such lenders by means
12 of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and
13 promises.

14 19. The fraudulent scheme operated and was carried out, in
15 substance, as follows:

16 a. Defendant MENDES made and caused to be made, false
17 statements to the SBA, financial institutions, and other lenders in
18 connection with the fraudulent applications for PPP and EIDL loans,
19 including false representations regarding the number of employees to
20 whom the companies had paid wages, the average monthly payroll, the
21 gross receipts earned by the purported businesses, and false
22 certifications that the loans would be used for permissible business
23 purposes.

24 b. Defendant MENDES electronically submitted, and caused
25 to be submitted, false and fictitious documents to the SBA and
26 financial institutions in support of the fraudulent PPP and EIDL loan
27 applications, including false tax documents.

1 c. In each of the PPP and EIDL applications submitted by
2 defendant MENDES, he certified that, as the authorized representative
3 of the businesses on whose behalf the applications were submitted, he
4 knew and understood the terms and rules of the PPP and EIDL programs,
5 and that the funds were to be used by the recipient to only pay
6 certain authorized business expenses.

7 d. Defendant MENDES knowingly misappropriated and misused
8 the PPP and EIDL loan proceeds for his own personal benefit,
9 including for expenses prohibited under the requirements of the PPP
10 and EIDL programs, such as the purchase of cryptocurrency and gold
11 coins for personal use and investment.

12 e. From in or around May 2020 and continuing through in
13 or around March 2021, in furtherance of his scheme, defendant MENDES
14 submitted and caused to be submitted fraudulent PPP and EIDL loan
15 applications seeking approximately \$184,690.67, and actually received
16 \$143,283.67 in PPP and EIDL proceeds to which he was not entitled.

17 C. USE OF AN INTERSTATE WIRE

18 20. On or about July 29, 2020, in Los Angeles County, within
19 the Central District of California, and elsewhere, for the purpose of
20 executing the above-described scheme to defraud, namely, the
21 misappropriation and misuse of the PPP loan proceeds fraudulently
22 obtained for Multi One Media, defendant MENDES caused others to
23 transmit, by means of wire communications in interstate commerce,
24 approximately \$20,500 in PPP loan proceeds from Company 1 into the
25 Wells Fargo 3113 Account.
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FORFEITURE ALLEGATION

[18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C) and 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c)]

1. Pursuant to Rule 32.2 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, notice is hereby given that the United States of America will seek forfeiture as part of any sentence, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C), and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), in the event of the defendant MATEUS PINA MENDES's conviction of the offense set forth in the sole count of this Information.

2. Defendant MENDES, if so convicted, shall forfeit to the United States of America the following:

a. All right, title, and interest in any and all property, real or personal, constituting, or derived from, any proceeds traceable to the offense; and

b. To the extent such property is not available for forfeiture, a sum of money equal to the total value of the property described in subparagraph (a).

3. Pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), defendant MENDES, if so convicted, shall forfeit substitute property, up to the value of the property described in the preceding paragraph if, as the result of any act or omission of defendant MENDES, the property described in the preceding paragraph or any portion thereof (a) cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence; (b) has been transferred, sold to, or deposited with a third party; (c) has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court; (d) has been

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1 substantially diminished in value; or (e) has been commingled with
2 other property that cannot be divided without difficulty.

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